



## Mount Rainier National Park

### Critical Tips for Getting a Wilderness Reservation

*After fifteen years of processing reservation requests and issuing wilderness permits, these are some of the critical things you need to know. I suggest you print these pages and use them as a guide. However, this does not mean you should ignore the rest of the information on this website. This page is simply bringing attention to the things I have observed that have created the biggest problems for people trying to get wilderness permits, especially for the Wonderland Trail. Reservations are accepted for trips that start from the Friday before Memorial Day through the last day of September. Trips starting outside this time-frame are first-come, first served. - Ranger Kaye.*

1. There is no camping of any kind at Longmire. If you are planning to stay at the National Park Inn (NPI) at Longmire please indicate that on your application. If you simply put "Longmire" it might be that you think there is a place to camp at Longmire. There isn't. Don't put us in the position of giving you the bad news when you show up to get your permit and you have no camp to stay at at Longmire. You will need to make separate arrangements to stay at the National Park Inn.
  2. The earliest you can pick up your permit is one day before your trip starts. If your trip starts on Tuesday, the earliest you can pick up your permit is on Monday (anytime during ranger station hours).
  3. If your party size is between 6 and 12, you must select camps that have a designated Group Site. Not all camps have group sites. See the list below.
  4. When making a reservation for a wilderness permit, the wider range of start dates you provide, the better your chances of getting the reservation. This is the single best thing you can do to increase your odds of success. It also helps to indicate if you will accept alternate camps if the ones you want are not available and, if hiking a loop hike such as the Wonderland Trail, whether or not you would hike the trail in *either* direction. Rangers will use their experience and knowledge of the park trails and terrain to determine if there are any reasonable available alternatives to the camps you want. While these options are not a guarantee, they can help increase the odds of getting a trip of some kind successfully booked. The reservation request form asks if you have a range of dates within which your hike can START... Not start AND end. If you put 7/21- 8/2 (that's twelve nights) it might be that the only START date that works in that range is
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8/2. Now your end date is 8/14, twelve nights from your new start date of 8/2. Pay attention to this detail.

5. When submitting your request for a reservation DO NOT SUBMIT MORE THAN ONE COPY OF YOUR REQUEST and do not have other members of your party submit reservation requests for the same trip. When you do so we may well book more than one reservation for you and charge you multiple times. More importantly, by doing this you are locking up precious space that would have allowed us to book someone else's hike but instead, because you have double-booked, we end up having to deny the other party their opportunity for a reservation. Ranger staff make every effort to remove duplicate requests.
  6. Please note that a reservation is not a permit. After you get your reservation, you need to come into a ranger station to register and get your permit, either the day you are scheduled to start your hike or one day before (but no sooner than one day before). When the time comes to get your permit you will speed up the process by having this information with you: The make, model, color and license plate number of ALL vehicles that will be left overnight anywhere in the park while you are on your trip. You will also need to provide an emergency contact name and phone number. Issuing your permit will be delayed until you provide this information. *Your permit is due to be picked up no later than 10am on the day you are scheduled to start your hike.* If you cannot make it to a ranger station by 10am on that day, you must call one of the ranger stations listed below at Mt. Rainier and let us know you will be later than 10am. If you do not, your reservation will be canceled and the space will be made available to others. If you call a location other than one of these three stations, your message to hold your reservation may not be received by the staff that need the information. Remember, YOU are the person most affected by a canceled permit. Please make the call.
  7. There are many websites devoted to Mt. Rainier. However, the final word is the official website ([www.nps.gov/mora](http://www.nps.gov/mora)). Information, forms and fees associated with applying for various activities within the park may change from season-to-season. If you end up with outdated forms or submitting the wrong fees, this can delay the processing of your application and increase the chance of you not getting a reservation. Non-park websites may not have the most current information you need to successfully request your wilderness permit. Also, do not simply go to Google and search "Mt. Rainier reservation form," or the like. Search engines cache old forms and you may end up with an outdated form. We see this every summer. Go to the official Mt. Rainier National Park website to get the current reservation form and relevant information.
  8. Be certain we can read everything on the reservation form and that your credit card information is correct. Otherwise, this is how it goes: When we cannot tell how many people are in your party, can't get your credit card to run, can't read your address or your campsite choices, we call you (assuming your phone numbers are correct). If you don't pick up, we leave a message and your
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application goes into our "problems" folder until we hear from you. In the meantime we move on to the next reservation request.

9. If you live outside the northwestern United States, or are not familiar with mountain weather, it will pay to find out more about Mt. Rainier's weather before you buy your plane ticket or put in for your vacation time. Most years conditions are not favorable for hiking in the high sub-alpine areas of the park until early-to-mid July, with snow still covering large sections of trails even then. If you come in June expect a lot of deep snow (feet of snow), potentially dangerous conditions and very difficult route-finding.
10. August is historically the busiest month of the year at Mt. Rainier. Expect high demands on permits.
11. If you are not able to get a reservation, your chances of getting a first-come, first-served permit is fairly good. The itinerary may or may not be exactly what you would prefer, but historically the Ranger and visitor are able to work out an itinerary that is acceptable to the visitor. You can attempt to get a first-come, first-served permit *no sooner than one day before you would like to start your trip.*

**Ranger Stations to call if you will be arriving after 10am to pick up your reservation**

Longmire Wilderness Information Center (360) 569-6650  
White River Wilderness Information Center (360) 569-6670  
Carbon River Ranger Station (360) 829-9639

**Wilderness Camps That Do Not Have Group Sites (Maximum party size is 5 people)**

Deer Creek, Dick Creek, Dick's Lake, Eagle's Roost, Forest Lake, Klapatche Park, Lower Crystal Lake, Pyramid Creek, Shriner Peak, Snow Lake, Upper Crystal Lake, Upper Palisades Lake, Yellowstone Cliffs

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